Concert Hall.

LAST NIGHT OF THE

ITALIAN

OPERA.

LESSEE, ... Mr. F. C. ADAMS.

Acting Manager. Signor Bennedetti.
Leaders, Signor Lietti & Mr. Kreutzer.
Stage Manager, Mr. F. Coemans.
Chorus Master, Mr. Hensler.
Prompter, Signor Pozzesi.

BENEFIT OF

SIGNORA

TRUFFI BENEDETTI.

FIRST APPEARANCE OF

MISS VIRGINIA WHITING,

The Celebrated Young American Prima Donna.

This (Monday) Evening, April 21, 1851.

will be produced Bellini's Grand Opera of

Selwyn's Theatre

MANAGER..MR. J. H. SELWYN

MAX MARETZEK'S

Grand Italian Opera

For a short Season of TWO WEEKS.

L A S T N I G H T.

Farewell Performance of Mme. PAREPA ROSA

Friday Evening, Dec. 20, 1867,

Only representation of

N O R M A.

NORMA..MME. PAREPA ROSA
ADALGISA..MME. TESTA
POLLIO..SIG. PANCANI
OROVESA..SIG. ANTONUCCI
CLOTILDE..MME. REICHARDT
FLAVIO..SIG. REICHARDT

Conductor..Sig. Torriani

Doors open at 7 . . . . Performance commences at 7.30

THEATRE.

LAST NIGHT BUT THREE, OF THE

ITALIAN OPERA!

ACTING MANAGER, -	SIG. BENEDETTI.
LEADERS, - - -	SIG. LIETTI. MR. KREUTZER.
STAGE MANAGER, -	MR. COEMANS.
CHORUS MASTER, -	MR. HENSLER.
PROMPTER, - - -	SIG. POZZESI.

FIRST APPEARANCE OF

MISS VIRGINIA

WHITING!

SIGNORA TRUFFI BENEDETTI

As - - - - - NORMA.

MISS VIRGINIA WHITING AS ADALGISA.

Sig. FORTI as POLLIONE.

Sig. Rosi as Oroveso.

SATURDAY

Evening, April 5th, 1851

Will be presented, positively the only time this season, Bellini's celebrated Opera of

NORMA

NORMA,..................SIGNORA TRUFFI BENEDETTI.
ADALGISA,..................MISS VIRGINIA WHITING.
POLLIONE,..................SIGNOR FORTI.
OROVESO,..................SIGNOR ROSI.
Clotilda,..................Mrs. Garrett.
Flavio,..................Signor Parozzi.

TO CONCLUDE WITH

Max Maretzek's celebrated

TIP TOP POLKA!

By M'lle Nathalie Fitzjames and Sig. Guiseppe Carrese.

PRICES OF ADMISSION.

To Parquette, Dress, and Second Circles,	$1.50
Galleries,	50
Private Boxes, (six persons,)	12.00

Seats and Private Boxes can be secured at the Box Office from **10 A. M. to 2 P. M.**

Books of the different Operas, in Italian and English, can be procured at the Box Office and Door of the Theatre.

☞ Doors open at 7 o'clock. Performance to commence at quarter before 8.

J. B. Nixon, Printer, 48 Broad Street.

CSM 6/14/71

A Boston first

Miss Sills as Norma

ARTS
ENTERTAINMENT

By Louis Snyder

Beverly Sills is one of the ranking prima donnas of our time, and Bellini's "Norma" is a role that has challenged her predecessors for the past 140 years. The two joined forces for the first time anywhere on the stage of the Aquarius (former Orpheum) Theater in weekend performances, Friday and Sunday evenings, by the Opera Company of Boston with extraordinary, if hardly unanticipated, results.

Norma embodies enough technical and interpretative obstacles to give pause to the most gifted singers, and between the lines of operatic history there are legends of many great ladies who were sufficiently wise to sidestep it entirely. But not Miss Sills, fortunately.

For from her first coming onstage to utter the challenging declamatory passages which lead to that incredible early evening test, "Casta diva," Miss Sills was in strong command of her voice and of the character of the Druid priestess whose high passion and stormy betrayal often seem at best academic. Again, not to Miss Sills. Every word and every phrase was invested with meaning, which flowed as the Bellinian musical line flows, seamlessly yet with powerful emotional impact.

And as the opera progressed, in the chameleon moods of affection and hate for her rival Adalgisa, for her children, and for their faithless father, Miss Sills's Norma made dramatic and musical sense. Even the showy, highly embellished passages of "Sì, cadrà," which follows "Casta diva" and takes Norma back to the mood of her early love, transcended coloratura showmanship and became part of an enigmatic character already revealed to us as warlike, dedicated, and magnetic, with more to come.

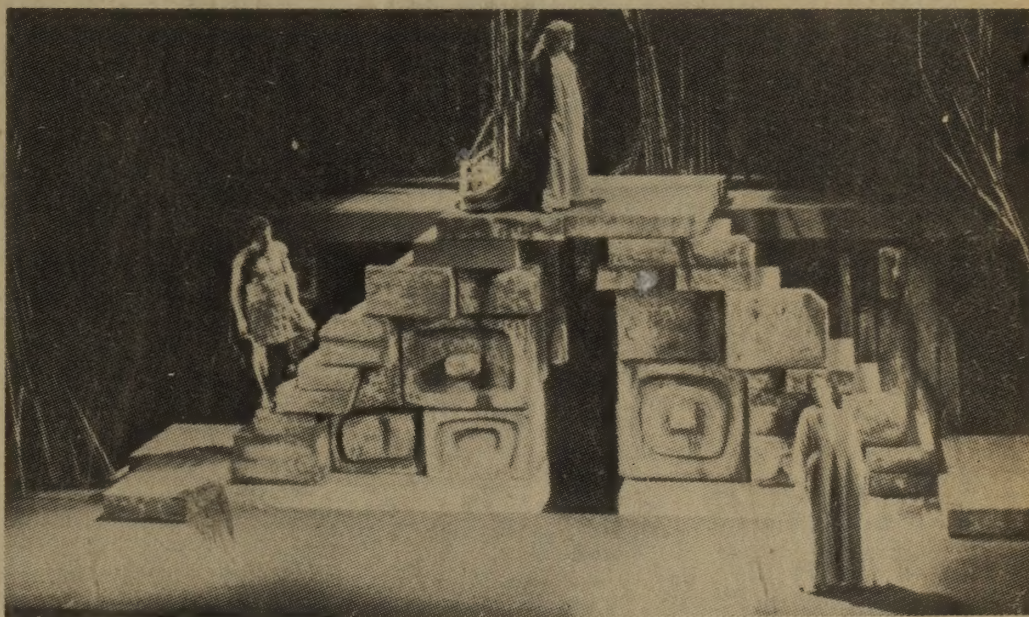
The capacity house could hardly have expected such a degree of fulfillment in a first Norma, and responded with increasing sound and fervor. What, one wonders, will Miss Sills's 50th Norma evoke?

Also present

As the Roman antihero, Pollione, John Alexander brought presence and experience in the role to Sarah Caldwell's attentively theatrical staging of the plot. The Roman Proconsul is one of opera's notorious cads, but Mr. Alexander's sterling performance of his opening aria did much to win sympathy for him, and increased admiration for a tenor of familiar attainments. Another company stalwart, Donald Gramm, made Oroveso the Archdruid human and compelling, while Eunice Alberts as Clotilde, and George Livings as Flavio handled smaller roles well.

Poor Adalgisa, who when she is onstage works almost as hard as Norma, and is given equally persuasive music to sing, was portrayed by Beverly Wolff of velvety mezzo voice and appealing, girlish mien. However, the plot if not the composer puts her in Norma's shadow, and it demands both dramatic and vocal strength to survive. Miss Wolff survived, quite often very creditably as in her one solo aria in the first act. But as the opera progressed, she seemed heavily taxed—was it the slow-fast tempi of Miss Caldwell who also conducted?—and on Friday at least was forced to sacrifice notes in the upper register which would normally be within her range.

Miss Caldwell, faced with spinning gold from a straw plot, was her usual inventive self, even to the extent of exhuming a "freedom" aria (for the eloquent Mr. Gramm as Oroveso to sing) composed by young Richard Wagner when he conducted "Norma" in Riga. It's terrible. But the Helen Pond-Herbert Senn sets triumphed over a shallow stage, the chorus performed nobly, and when it was good, the orchestra was quite passable.

Beverly Sills as Norma

John Alexander, Beverly Sills, Beverly Wolff

AT THE DRUID PARTY—Attending the Boston Opera Company's Druid party were Mrs. E. M. Loew and William Morris Hunt, both of Milton (left photo).

Singer Beverly Sills listens as Adriana Anca performs on the harp at the party in the Parker House Saturday night. (Bob Dean photos)

MARJORIE SHERMAN Globe 6/14/71

Druid party caps Hub's opera 'Norma'

The Druid epilogue to Beverly Sills's long, rare performance in Bellini's "Norma" Friday night was a party at the Parker House that was as fantastic as anything the pre-Christian Celts could have thought up.

Live oak trees (Druid meant "oak-wise," and feasting and ceremonies circled the oak) were a green bower for the most succulent feasting Boston had done in many a year. Pheasant and quail, wild duck, rabbit Hasen Pfeffer, roast pig, braised boar meat, and sea fare from salt herring to caviar were garlanded with fruits and flowers and ice sculptures held mead from England and champagne from France.

Taken straight out of the history of the Druid poets and musicians, the menu made Escoffier look like a second rate eater.

It was midnight before the Sarah Caldwell Boston Opera constituents got over from the Aquarius Theatre, but nobody turned homeward until well after one, even golden girl Beverly who'd had quite a week and is off to London today. One of the best friends the Boston Opera ever had, Beverly is still nostalgic for New England, and not even her success at La Scala can tempt her from the idea of coming back here to live someday.

"I could never live forever in New York," the top-rated singer of two continents told Laszlo Bonis, Boston Opera president, and his decorative Eva as the party surged on around them.

She had warm words of praise for 10-year-old Jeannie Haffenreffer, who did her first real opera Friday. Jeannie's parents, the Frederick Haffenreffers, earned praise themselves for just about every role short of the stage since this Boston Opera venture began.

"So have faithfuls such as Mrs. James Munroe, the Thomas Franks, the David Skinners, the Bert Steirs, Mel and Janet Field, E. M. Loew and his Sonia, and the William Morris Hunts.

Continuing a conversation where they left off at the Morning Musicales earlier this year were Mrs. Alfred Willmann and singer Donald Gramm of the opera cast, and Beverly's young daughter Muffie sat with Dr. and Mrs. William Appleton's Jane. Mathilde Bird was with Matin Slobodkin, and Georgia Welles came with Charles Mongan.

Also present were Mrs. Gilbert Peakes, who did such a talked-about room for the Junior League's "Show House," the Dean Edmunds', the John Latshaws, Nancy and Bill Stone, Mrs. Constantine Pertzoff, the Charles Narins talking Rome with opera's Beverly Wolff, who flew over from Italy especially to play Adalgisa and scores more.

BOSTON THEATRE

E. BOOTH and J. S. CLARKE............................*Lessees*
J. B. BOOTH........................ *Acting and Stage Manager*

FAREWELL PERFORMANCE

OF THE

PAREPA-BRIGNOLI

Grand Italian Opera

Musical Directors,........Signors Nicolao and Carl Rosa

SATURDAY AFTERNOON, April 6th, 1867,

Bellini's celebrated Opera of

NORMA!

Madame Perepa, as..Norma
M'me Patti Strakosch, as..................................Adalgisa
Sig. Brignoli, as..Polione
Sig. Susini, as..Oroveso

THIS EVENING,

Benefit of W. P. Prescott

MACHINIST,

The following artists have kindly volunteered: Mr. J, S. MAFFITT, Mr. W. H. BARTHOLOMEW, Mr. J. H. BUDWORTH, and the talented children, Misses JENNIE PRESCOTT and JESSIE ROGERS. The great London Sensational Drama, "MONEY AND MISERY, or, High and Low Crime;" "PERSECUTED DUTCHMAN," in which J. H. BUDWORTH will appear; concluding with a Laughable Interlude, in which Messrs. MAFFITT and BARTHOLOMEW will appear.

The Pianofortes used are from the celebrated manufactory of Chickering & Sons.
The Cabinet Organs used are from the celebrated manufactory of Mason & Hamlin, Boston—Warerooms in Boston, 154 Tremont Street; in New York 596 Broadway.
☞ The only correct and authentic edition of the Opera Libretto may be had at the theatre.

FREE LIST POSITIVELY SUSPENDED.

Doors open at 2................ ..Performance to commence at 2 1-2 o'clock, P.M.

☞ EDWIN BOOTH ☜

Will commence an engagement April 8th.

OPERA PRICES OF ADMISSION:

P[illegible]quette, Parquette Circle..........................$1.5[illegible]
Seats Secured in advance, extra, 50 Cents.
Balcony Secured Seats, extra..................................[illegible]
Family Circle..
Choice Seats Secured in Family Circle, extra, 25 Cents.
Amphitheatre...

F. A. Searle, Printer.

The Opera

Beverly Sills Dares the Lead in 'Norma'

June 13 1971

By RAYMOND ERICSON

Special to The New York Times

BOSTON, June 12—"A lot of vultures are going to come to hear you sing," Sarah Caldwell told Beverly Sills during the Opera Company of Boston's rehearsals of "Norma."

Miss Caldwell, who was directing and conducting the Bellini opera, spoke at least a half truth. The soprano's decision to tackle one of the great and most demanding roles in opera had aroused a good deal of curiosity, and there was a large contingent of New Yorkers at the Aquarius Theater here last night to witness her first performance of it.

Miss Sills, who has tried out roles with the Boston company before because she has enormous admiration for Miss Caldwell, also enjoys an enormous Boston following. The theater was sold out.

•

In recent tradition, Norma has become a heavily dramatic role, and Miss Sills was bringing to it a much lighter voice than usual. It was this that had aroused so much speculation, even doubt, on the part of friends and admirers. Put it this way: Could Helen Hayes play Medea?

Asked why she wanted to do Norma, the soprano said: "Why not? When I was young and studying with Estelle Liebling, I said I wanted to sing Norma. She said 'wait till you're 40.' Well, I'm 42. The range is in my voice. I know people find it hard to imagine a light voice in the part. Yet it shouldn't be pigeon-holed. After all, Jenny Lind used to sing it. Norma is a matter of temperament and depends a lot on how it's acted. I'm fascinated by the part. Norma is one hell of a dame."

The last day of rehearsal, she said that she had found Norma easier to sing than Queen Elizabeth in "Roberto Devereaux," one of her great successes with the New York City Opera. "The most difficult part," she said, "is its length. We're doing the opera in its original two acts, each lasting an hour and a half. It's killing my feet. With the stamina needed, for once I don't feel too fat."

•

Miss Sills may not have a Norma voice, in today's terms, but she is the most interesting portrayer of the role this writer has seen. By acting and vocal inflection, she created a complex character. She was the noble priestess and the woman so passionately in love that she becomes vengeful, forgiving and sacrificial.

For a first performance, it was securely sung. The soprano made up in intensity of tone what it lacked in power and sensuousness, and she kept this intensity going with extraordinary steadiness. She avoided falling back on the soft, pretty voice that is one of her great assets.

The "Casta diva" aria, taken very slowly, was most beautifully sung. The scenes with her children were very affecting, and the final confession and sacrifice were genuinely pathetic. There were fast passages needing more sustained vocal brilliance to give the role its final grandeur, but the voice may grow into this with further performances (already scheduled). On the whole, Miss Sills triumphantly vindicated her daring.

The performance was also a tribute to Miss Caldwell's exceptional talents as a director. "Norma" takes place during the Roman occupation the theme of the Druids' rebellion. She had the chorus skulking about like guerrillas, digging out hidden caches of arms and putting together what looked like a catapult stolen from the Romans.

Working a high, shallow stage (the Aquarius is the house), she had gotten from her designers, Helen Pond and Herbert Senn, a handsome basic set of stone and bamboo-like trees (more Angkor Wat than druidic).

Her directon of the principals was occasionally almost too detailed and naturalistic. Norma's discovery that Pollione loves Adalgisa looked like soap opera—suburban husband caught between wife and mistress, the wife's best friend. Everyone suffered terribly while singing bland or jaunty music, some of it on waltz tempo.

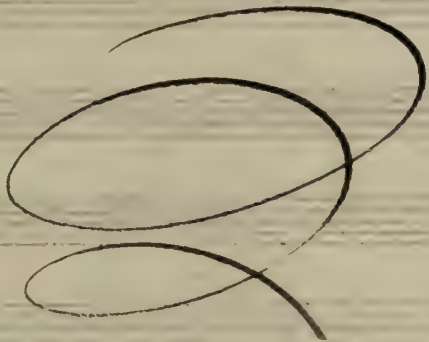
•

As conductor, Miss Caldwell gave a very fine reading of the score. She pointed up its greatness by taking care to make its wide range of emotional points, at the risk of making a long opera longer. There were excellent performances from the leading singers besides Miss Sills. Beverly Wolff sang quite brilliantly as Adalgisa except when she forced her high notes and consequently lost them. John Alexander's Pollione was firmly sung yet had an unusual amount of nuance. Donald Gramm made a rather paternal and kindly Oroveso but sang most sensitively.

Miss Caldwell had resurrected an extra aria for Mr. Gramm—an insert written by Wagner for a performance of "Norma" in Riga. In praise of liberty, it is quite martial. Stylistically more like Meyerbeer than Bellini, it sounded both funny and rousing.

The New York Times/Ivan Massey

Beverly Sills as Norma and John Alexander as Pollione in a scene from the second act

1/2.

Genova al Carlo Felice Carn.le 1864=5

Norma

Introduzione

Rec.vo e Duetto Atto 2.do

N.o 6.

Si alza il Sipario

a 2.

pp

p

pp

pp

pp

appena perdendosi

pp

a2.

pp

sempre piano

animando

pp

pp

p

pp

Solo

pp

Solo

Solo

ppp

pp

tremolo

pizz. arco vv. p

arco p

pizz. arco p

Comparisce Norma
palida, e contrafatta

pizz.

pizz. arco

a. 2.

a. 2.

tr

ppp

tr

pp

pp

pp

morendo

Recit°

mf

tutto sotto voce

Dormono entrambi

Recit°

1º Tempo

1º assai

1º tempo

non vedran la

appena
ppp

appena
ppp

mano che li per-cuote

appena
ppp

non pentirti o —

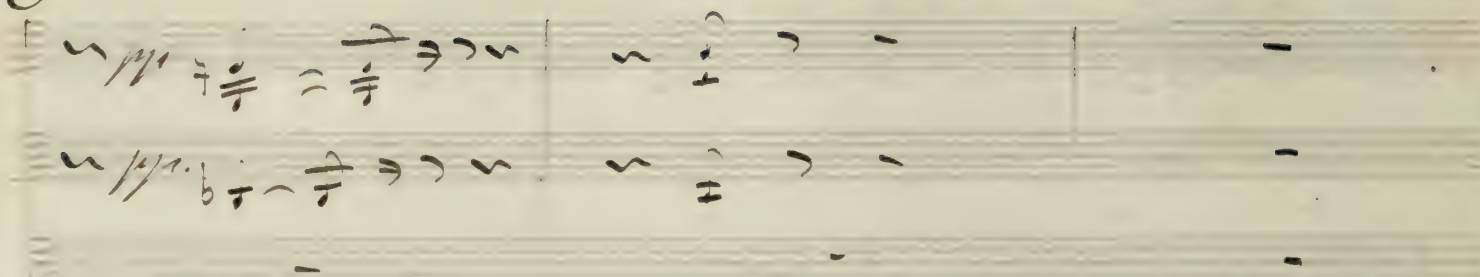
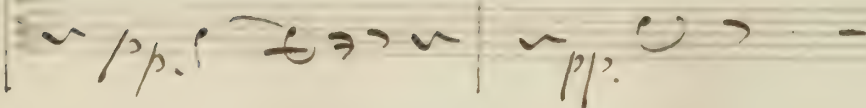
Recit.º

pp

pp

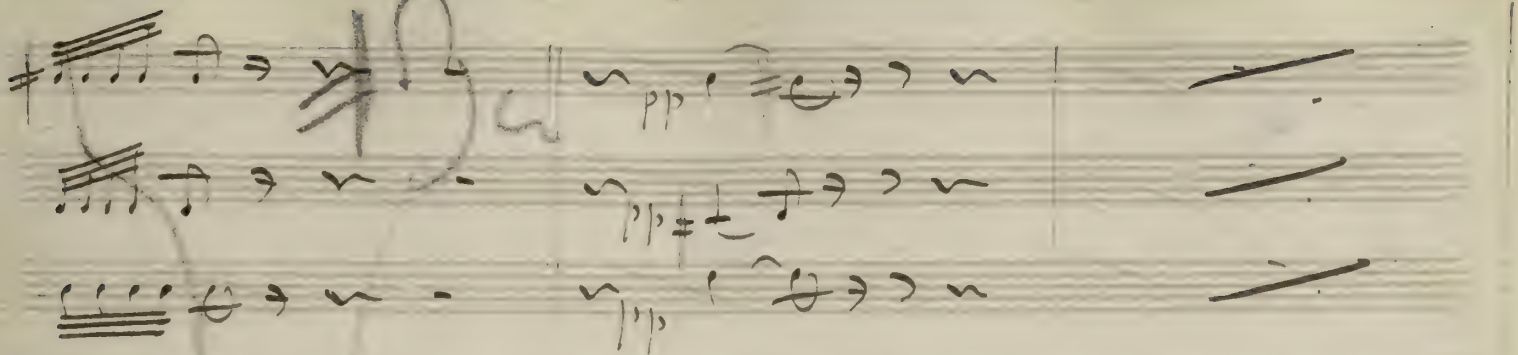
core viver non ponno qui supplizio è in Roma

pp.

pp.

obbrobrio avrian peggior supplizio assai schiavi d'una ma=

-trigna ah no giammai

And.te

27

solo

Solo.

(sorge risoluta)

muojano

(fa un passo e si ferma)

si

non posso avvici=

And.te

– nar mi un gel mi prende e in

1º Tempo

appena

1º Tempo

lento a piacere

fronte mi si solleva il crin i figli uc- ci- do

pizz.

Sene ri- te- ne ri-

figli es si pur Dianzi De=

ligia mi - - - - - a

e forma

sotto voce

essi nel cui sor- ri- so

sotto voce pp.

pp.

il per-do - - no del ciel mirar ere -

35

coll. Viollo

Odei

ed io li sve ne - ri

Recit.

arco

lento e pp.

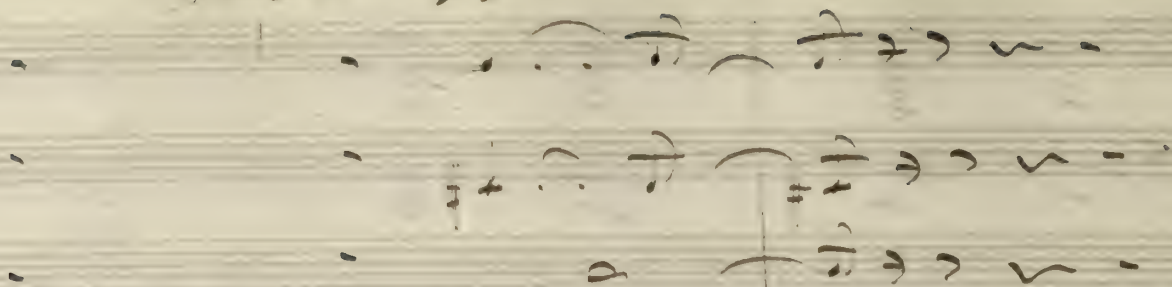
risoluto

Di che son rei

Di Pollion son

lento pp.

ppp

pp

ppp

(pausa)

figli ecco il de - litto

esso per me son morti.

mf.

ppp

pp

muojan per lui e non sia pena che la sua fo-

All°

(S'incammina verso al letto)

migli ... fe- riam

tremolo

cresc.

all° pp.

(alza il Pugnale)

(essa inorridita da un grido)

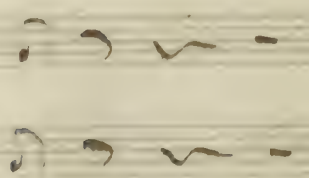
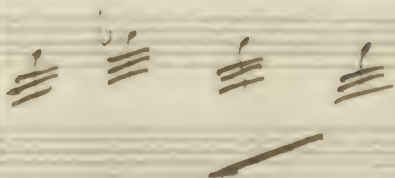
ah

All.º Agito

col t.^{ni}

in Eb.

in Eb.

p

al grido i fanciulli si svegliano assai se gli abbraccia piangendo amaramente

no - son miei fi gli miei

All.º agit.º

figli

Reci.

Recit.° e Duetto

marcate

Norma

o la Clotilde

Clotilde

Sorte Clotilde vola - Adalgisa a me venga

ella qui

pp

pp

pp

Clotilde par

va.

presso solitaria s'ag gira e prega e plora

ff

Seuto

Vi.

Vi.

(largho)

Pensando il tuo fallo e poi... si=

largo

mora

forte Adalgisi

Adalgisa non temer

mer-

largo

4
2

Allo Risoluto

Norma

Adag.

Chiamio Norma

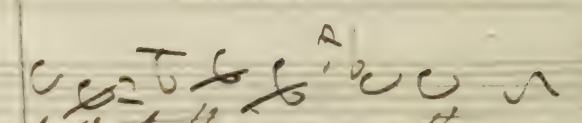
sbigottita

quaitiocoprei volto h. isto pallor

49

Norma

Pallor di morte io tutta lonta mia ri velo

una preghiera sola odi e la = dempi se pietà più merta il pre=

fente mio duol e il duol futuro il

tutto tutto io prometto

gura

il giuro

odi purgar quest

contaminati della mia presenza ho riso = luto ne trar meco io

Lento

Lento

posso quest' infe= lici a te gli af fido

o Ciel

Lento

nel romano campo guidali a lui che nominar non oso

a' megli affidi

oh che mai chiedi

Sposo ti sia men crudo io gli perdono e

184

moro

Sposo

ah mai

pei figli suoi pei fi= fi= gli suoi tim= pla=no

punta d'Arco

Oboe

in Sib

in Do

in Fa

in Do

in Sib

in Fa

All.o mod.o

a)

deh con te con te li

pren di ti so= stieni ti di= =fendi non ti

Chi do onori e fasci a tuoi figli ci fian fer-

bati prego sol dhei miei non lasci schiavi ab=

bietti abbando= no = ti basti o te che dispre=

-gata che tra- dita io fui per te. A- dal-

gi so Deh ti muova tanto strazio del mio

cor Al - - - dal gi sei Deh ti movai tanto

stra — — sù del mio cor

Norma! ah!

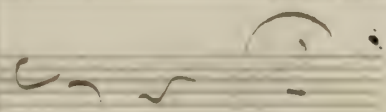
Norma ancora a- mata Madre ancor mi fanni per

me tienti, figli ah non ah non sia mai chi'io mi

tu giu = rasti

tolga questa a = rene

si giu

rai mai il tuo bene il sol tuo be- ne vado al

campo ed all in = girato tutti io reco i tuoi to-

menti la pietà che m'hai de= sento par te=

ra sublimi ac= centi Spera ah Spera in cor na=

tiras ni des= tar si mi Lui ve= drai del suo

con son io se- cura Norma! an- cor vi regne-

ia Nor = ma Spera nel suo core Norma an =

cor si regne = ra Mor = ma Spera nel suo

Norma

cor: e Norma ancor vi re - gne:

arco

Ch'io lo preghi ah

ra

no giammai ah no

Nor:

no più non

— — mio ti piega

a2 a2 a2

Todo . parti va

ah

a

no giam mai no

Lento

ah

no

Lento

Andte

C

mirao Norma a'tuoi gi nocchi questi

cari tuoi pargo= letti ah pieta=de di lor ti

perche

tocchi se non hai non hai di te pietà

Dal Capo

mai la mia co stanza vuoi sce - mare con mille af=

fatti più lu= singhe ah più spe= ranze presso a

93

Un poco meno

p.

morte il cor non ha

ah per

mi = ra questi ca

Un poco meno

Col Canto

Lento a piacere

che ah perche l'avviri scemar ah perche ah perche

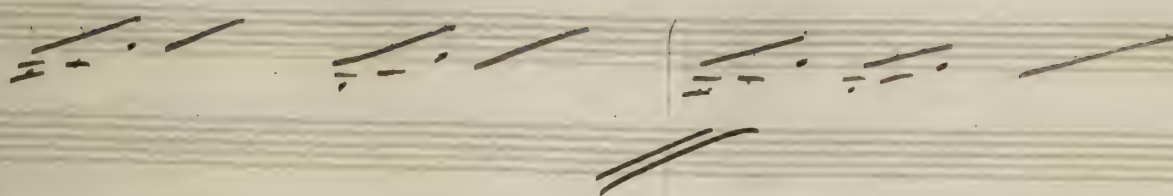
porgo lieti questi ca- ri a li vi di Mirado

mai la mia co=stanza suoi sce=mare con mille af=

Norma ah tuoi gi=nocchi questi cari tuoi pargo=

Tutti più lu-singhe ah più speranza presso al

Tutti: ah pie ta= de di lor ti tocchi se non

(Norma)

morte il cor non hanno il cor no non

hai di te pie= ta ah non hai pie=

Trio

ran ga il cor non ha

tra — i di te pie= tà

All°

ah

cedi ah cedi

l'asciami ci t'ama e tu

ei già sen pente l'a:

mai quest'ani ma soll'amista del or

o giovi = netta e unoi

fonte

rendere i diritti tuoi o too al cielo egli

si hai

uomini

giuro celarmi o = gnor

vin to

ab braciami

107

Lento colla parte

Lento e spincere

tro = vo una = mi = ca an =

Lento

Allo

Allo

Allo

si finiò all

Allo

ora al- l'ore es- treme compagna

tua com pagna m'avrai per rico-

unirci per ricovrarci insieme ampia e la

terra e la terra as sai teco del fato al:

onte ferma ed opporrò la fronte fin che il tuo core a

teco del fato all'onta ferma ed opporrò la

Oboe

batteré iò senta sul mio cor sen=

fronte fridhe ~~batte~~ mi batte il cor sen = ta

ta sul mio cor lo

sul mio cor sul cor lo

2 3

sen= ta io sen= ta nel mio

1 2 3

cor lo sen: tà io

senta sul mio cor

Sul

con

ah si si

ah

ah

Dal Segno al 𝄋

di fino all' a = re all' ore e = stremo

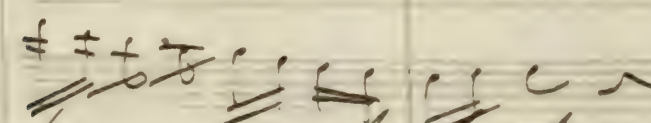
Pizz

compagna tua compagna m'avrai

per ri co= orarei per rico=orarei in sieme

am pia e la terra e la ter ra as sa i

te del fato all' onte

fermo opporrò la fronte

tico del fato all' onte

finche il tuo core a batte re io senta sul mio cor.

ferma opporro la fronte finche mi batte il cor sen=

sen- ta sul mio cor

ta sul mio cor sul cor

lo sin ta io sen ta

lo

mel imò cor lo sen=

Archi

tu io ferita sul mio cor.

Corni

Flauto

Sul

cor

II

I

II

I

8^{va} Corno

10

sem-

fa sul mio cor

ff

Unis

Lunga

pizz°

Unis°

p

Cor in Mi♭

Unis. Oboe

Unis

Con Mistero

non par:

finora e al Cam = po e al Cam =

=tà

finora è al cam =

i fer=ri cor il fra=

po tutto il di co dell'

gor Dell' armi il suon il fra= =gor

dell'armi il

8ᵛᵃ e l°

Unis e l°

suon il suon dell' armi dell'insegne il vento lar

Unis.

8^a el°

un breve in= ciampo un breve inciampo non ci

turbi non ci ar- -re -sti un breve in-

- - 8va etc

ciam po non ci tur bi nonci Ar= re sti atten=

. diam atten - diam un breve in - ciampo non ci turbi non ci

3a

Unis°

8a ct°

Unis° ct°

-resti e in si- -lenzio il cor s'ap- -presti la gran-

opra la grand'opra a consu=mar e in Si= lenzio il Cor rap=

pre sti la grand' opra — a consu. mar la grande opra a Consu.

1 2.

arco

60

Unis.o

3.a

Unis.o

Unis.o

Unis.o

Unis.o

ff

attendiamo un breve in — ciam

mar in si- - len - zio atten- - diam la grand'opra a Com-

ff.

8a 1o 2o

Unis. Tutti

po attendiamo un breve in-

mar

ciampo non ci turbi non ci ar-

5 6

Unis.o

8a Clar:

1o Unis.o Clar 2o 8a Sop.
2a Unis 1o Cl.o

e in silen zio a Com= pier l'opra la grand'opra a Confu=

attendiamo un breve in

=ciam

=len — zio atten = diam la grand'Opra a Consu=

175

po attendiamo un brave in=
=ciampo non ci turbi non ci av=

=resti

e in si = len zio a Com = pier l'opra la grand'opra a compi-

8ª

-mar e in si- — len — -zio la grand'

o pra a con su — = mar e in si= — len —

-zio la grand- Opra a con su- -mar in Si-

13

-len- — -zio

pizz°

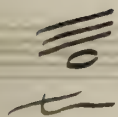
Oroveso

Guer: rieri a voi ve: nirne Credea fo=

arco

unis p

rie ro d'avvenir mi- glio - re

il generoso ar= dore l'ira che in sen vi bolle io credea se con-

Andte

3a

il 1o unit al 2o Fl.

il 2do 8a al 1o Flo

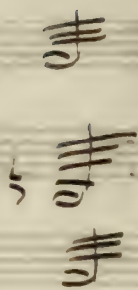
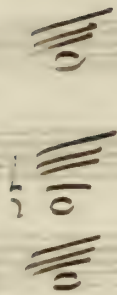
8a sotto Cllo

dar ma il Dio non volle

Come le nostre Selve l'ab bor-

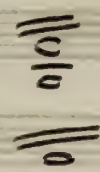
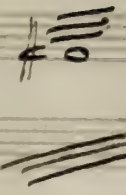
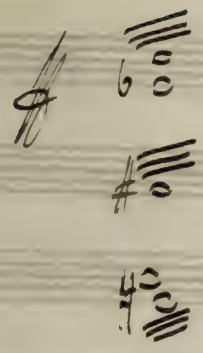
un piùtemuto e

ri to procon so le non la scia non riede al Te bro

And.e

fiero Latino Condot fiero A Pollion suc- -ce -de

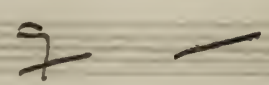
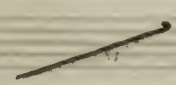
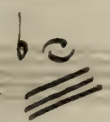
e Norma il

E Norma il

All:

sà Di pace e consigliero an-cor

All:

Unis.

Unis.

Oroveso

in van di Norma la mente investigai

Unis.

Orov.

Al fato piegar la fronte sa pa=

e che far pen si

Unis.

varci e nullo lasciar sos=pe tto del fallito in=ten to

e finger

Unis.

Unis.to

Unis.to

Trombe { in Do
con chiavi in Do

Cruda legge il fento

sempre

Andte Sostº

Unis

Andte

ah del Tebro al giogo in - degno fremo io

pure fremo all' ar mi anelo mane ssr'io e' sempre il

8ª sop. Oboe

Unis.

Cielo Ma con-si- glio ma consiglio e fimo- lor

ah si fin

giamo se il pinger gio - vi mai il fu= ror in sen si

Di vo— riam in cor lo sdegno tal che

Co vi

Roma estinta il ereda diver - rà si che desto è si

arco

sf

in Fa

rie da più tre= mendo più tremendo a divampa

guai per Roma allorchè il

1 2

Come dai numeri indietro

si mu- -lia -mo si ma consi-glio è il simu-

se - gno dia dall'armi il sacro al - tar

se - gno dia il sacro al- tar dia dell'armi il sacro il

3 4 5

:lar

si ma fingiam se il finger giovi mai il furore infranti Divarrà che desto ai ri:

tar:

Cesi guai

guai per Roma che il

6 7 8

par ma fin — già

segno Dio dall'armi il sacro al- tar ma fin — già

=mo e con si glio si mu lar ma fin=

mo e con si glio si =mu= lar ma fin=

12 13 14

-gia

mo e un con-si glio il si mu-

15 16 20r

Unis

-lar si fin- -già -mo

8ª sotto ai Fl.º

solo

Solo

Recit°

pp

pp

pp

Ei tor ne=

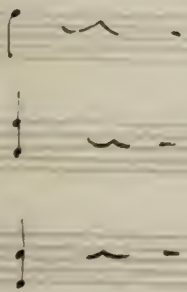
Recit°

215

-rà Si mia fidanza è posta in tal gisa ei tornerà pen-

Lento

pp

-fi-to supplichevole a-mante

Oh a tal pen= siero Sparì e il nuvol Nero che mi premea la

fronte è il sol m'ar- ride come del primo a- - mo

1° Tempo

re ai di ai di fe=

1° Tempo

pp

pp

Clotilde

che dici fa:vella fa:vella

Norma Uopo è d'Ar:dir Lassa

ed io fi= darmi di lei de=

indarno parlò Adalg gisa e piante

:ne-a Di Mano uscirmi e bella del suo dolore

ppp

presentarsi all'empio ella tra- ma - va

ella ritorna al

pp

pp

Tempio trista do= lente implora di proferir suoi

pp

ed e = gli

voti ed egli rapir = la giura anco all'altar del

troppo il fellon pre= =sume lo previen mia ven=

Nume

in Tempo

pp

=detta è qui di

san gue sangue Ro=

in Tempo

f

Unis

p.

man sco —— re — ran torren = ti

Norma corre all'altare e batte 3 volte lo Scudo d'Irmen-Sul

cres.

8va Sotto 1o No

a 2

il primo colpo lo darà insieme all'ultima nota dell'Orchestra

Trombe sul Palco in Do

Orovego

Coro di dentro

Squil — la il - bron zo Dei

All° Marcato e secche

cres.

cres.

cres.

Coi Oboe

marcato e secche

All°

3ª sotto

3ª sotto

8ª sotto

1º Vº

1ª Tromba   2 Tromba

Coi Oboe

Oroveso
col Basso
del Coro

Nor — ma che gi—

8a. 2d. Oboe

Unis

per – cos – so lo sen – do d'Irmin –

Sol

quali alla

Tremolo

rinfz.

Timpani

Fagotti

ter - ra

De - re - ti in - ti - ma

tremolo

rinforz

Fag.

Timp.

Norma

Guerra

Stra- ge

Ster- minio

a—

a—

Fr.

8a 2do Oboe

Coi Ssi

Tromboni

Trombe

noi pur dian - zi paci d'impe -

Recit.°

a loco

Recit.°

Norma

ed ira a - desso armi favore e

- nea pel tuo labbro

Largo col Canto

morti il cantico di guerra alzate o for —

All.° Feroce

Banda

Trombe in Mi

- ti

i Norma

Coro

Oroveso col Basso del Coro

a 2

Cl.ti uniti alle Trombe

B.

Coi Tromboni

Gal - li - che del - ve quante han

Unis 1° Sopr.

Li - geri in - fin - ri ne ger -

3ª Sotto

8ª 1º V.no

Coi ff.mi

quer - cie pro - du - con guer - rier

Col 1º Sop.no

- jo - glia con fu - nebre fuor

Dall' ⊕ al ⊕

guerra

qual sui greggi fa - me - li che

stragge stragge ster - minio ven-

3a

8a ...

Con ...

bel — ve
Sui Ro — ma — ni van

-det — ta
già co — min — cia si

C.

1º flauto

Uni

es - si - a ca - der

Coi Sospiri

com - - pie s'of - fretta

San - gue

San - gue

co - me

san - gue ven - det - ta

san - gue le fal - li che scu - ri

bia - de da fal - ce mie tut - te

8a 2do Oboe

si - no al
Tron - co ba - gna - te - ne

son di
Ro - ma le schiere ca -

Come dal x
al D:

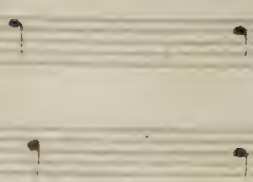
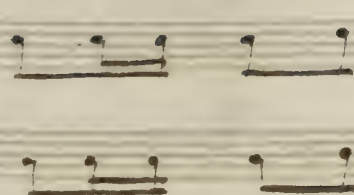
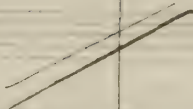
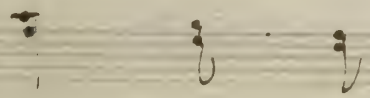
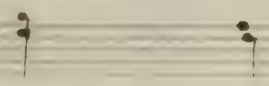
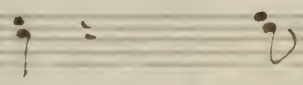
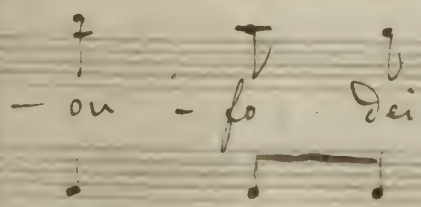
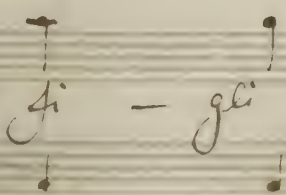
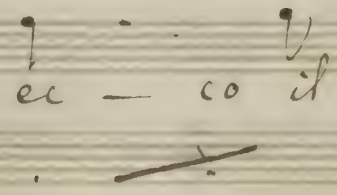
Stragge
tronchi i

son

-du - te

stragge

Col 1° fag°

van - ni re - ci - si gli ar - ti - gli

ab — bat — tu — ta ec — co l'a — quila al

Unis 1º Fag.º

suoi

a - mi -

ra - ce il tri -

– on – fo dei fi – gli ec – co il

Dio so - vra' un rag - gio di

8a 1o Oboe

8a 2do Oboe

unis

soli

Unis

Recit:

in Re

in Re

Norma

Clotilde

Oroveso

Ne compi il rito o

Recit:

ella sia pronta non

Norma nè la vittima accenni

All.°

a 2

mai l'altar tremendo di vittima mancò

All.°

pp.

pp.

ma qual tu - mul - to

al nostro Tempio in—

tremolo

sulto de' cenni Romano nella sacra chiostra delle vergini a-

tremolo

All.o assai Mod.to

Timp.

Fagotti

Norma

che af-

Clotilde

Colto

-lume egli fu

Coro

un Ro- mano

p.

All.o assai Mod.to

-colto se mai foss' egli

Unis

a noi vien tratto

è

Des - so !

e Pol -

con vendi - cata a - desso

- lion

Recit

p.

p.

p.

Oroveso

Sa-crilego nemico e chi ti spinge

p.

a violar queste temute soglie a sfidar l'ira d'Irminsul

Pollione

Ferisci

ma non inter - ro - garmi

Allegro

in Do

in Do

Norma (svelandosi)

io ferir deggio scof-

Allegro

- ta - te - vi

di Norma

chi veggio Norma

Sostenuto

mf cresc.

mf

in Si b

in Mi b

in Fa

Trombe 1a 2do

f

di Se -

Coro

Unis

Il sacro ferro impugna vendica il Dio

Sost.o mf cresc.do

All.° Risoluto

a mezza forza

a mezza voce

piano

tremolo

ah non poss' i-o

Aremi

Unis

che fi - a

perchè l'ar -

poss' io sentir pie-

- re - trio

Recit.

-tà

Pausa

io deggio interro-

fe - ri - sci

Recit.

-garlo investigar qual fia l'insi-diatore complice mi-

- mistra' che il profan per - suase a fallo is -

All.° Mod.to

in Si b

-tremo Ite per

Unis

che far

All.° Mod.to

1.

2.

1.

Timpani

Pollione

Io tremo

pensa

2

Cl.

unis:to

a 1.° flauto

unis:e

unis:to

a

in mia man alfin tu

Unis°

Sei niun po= tria spezar tuoi nodi io lo pos-so

tu vol

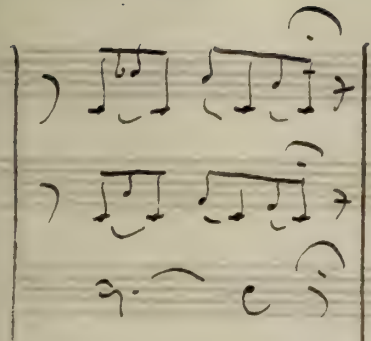
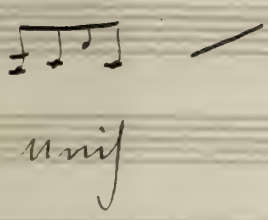
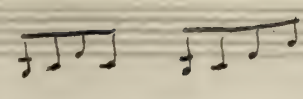
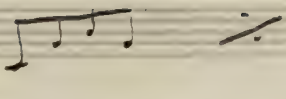
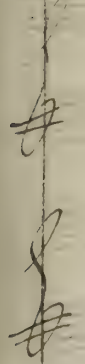
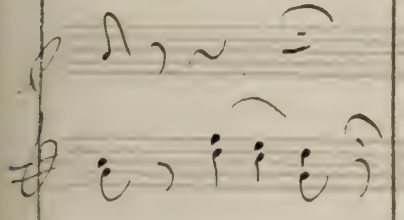
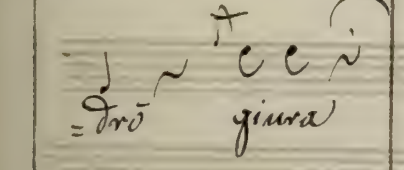
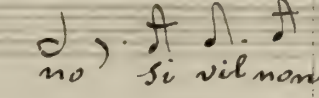
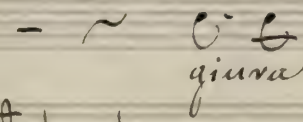
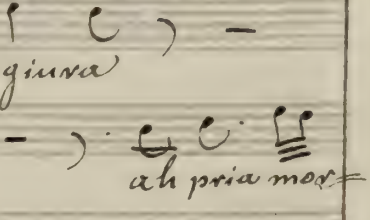
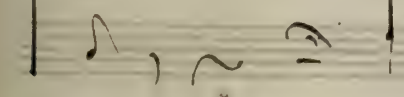
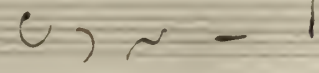
Io lo voglio m'odi pel tuo

dei e come?

B

Come dalla A al B

Dio pei figli tuoi giurar dei che d'ora in poi Adal=

=gisa fuggi= vai all'al= tar all'altar non la torrai e la

vita io ti per- dono e - - - mai più e mai più ti vive=

unis

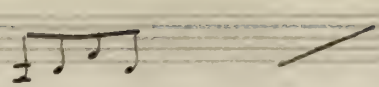
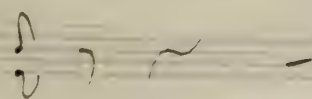
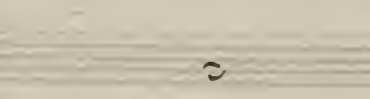
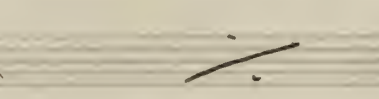
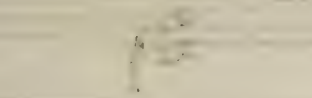
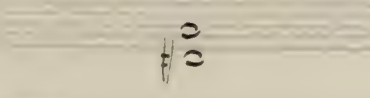
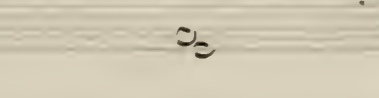
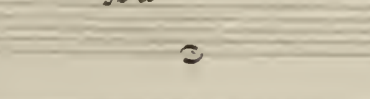
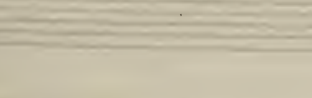
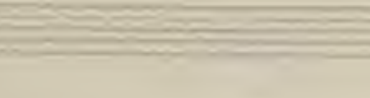
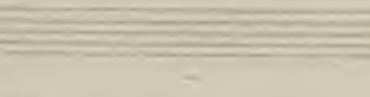
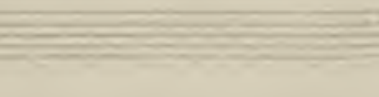
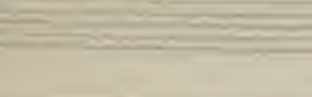
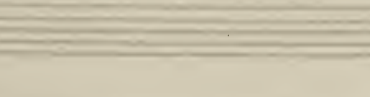
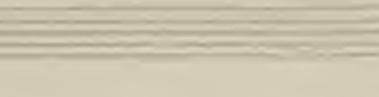
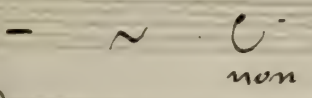
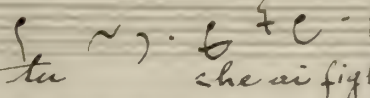
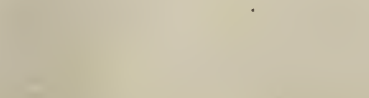
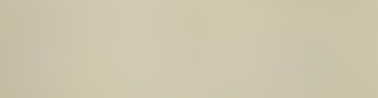
Come dall' A al B

=drò giura

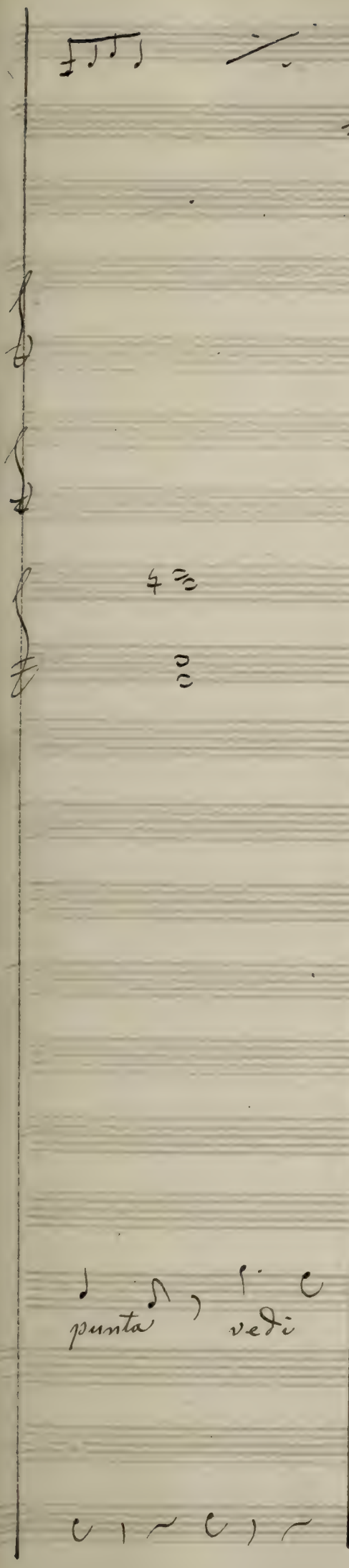
no si vil non sano

giura giura

ah pria mor=

=rei

non sai tu che il mio fu=ro=re passa il tuo

ch'ei piombi at=

Solo

non sai

tu che ai figli in

core questo

= tendo

ferro si so = v'ressi alzai la
o Dio che in- ten-do

punta vedi vedi a che son giunta non fe =

=rii .. mestisto a= Desso confu= mar potrei l'ec=

pp

pp

a piacere

=cesso un is= tante ad esser madre nipotrei dimenti=

Più Mosso

pp

pp

pp

pp

abbandonandosi

car

ah cru= dele in sendel padre il pu=

arco

pp

Più Mosso

= gual tu dei vi = brar a me il porgi che

a te?

Marcate assai

pp

unis.

pp

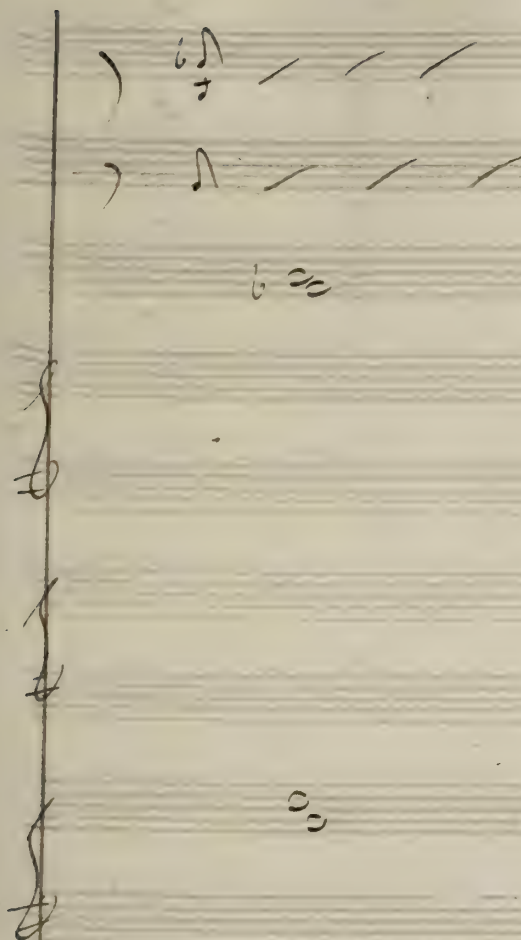
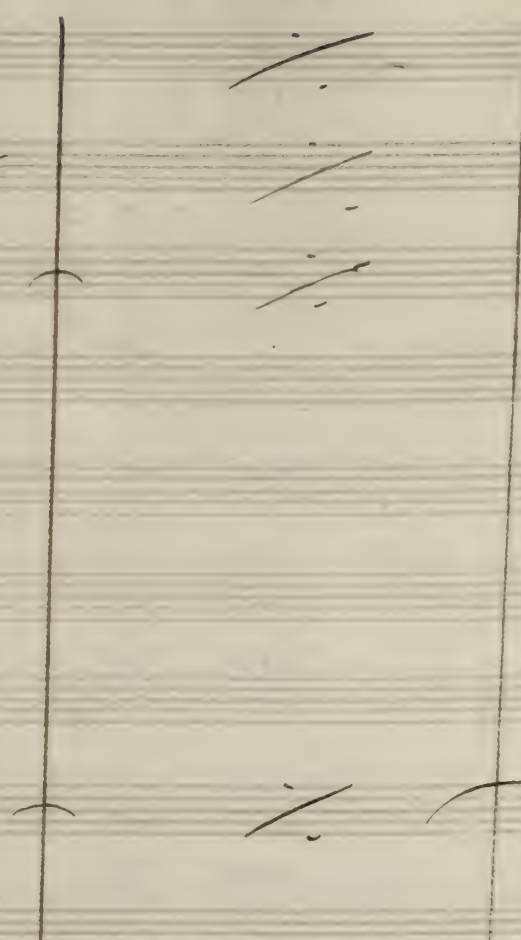
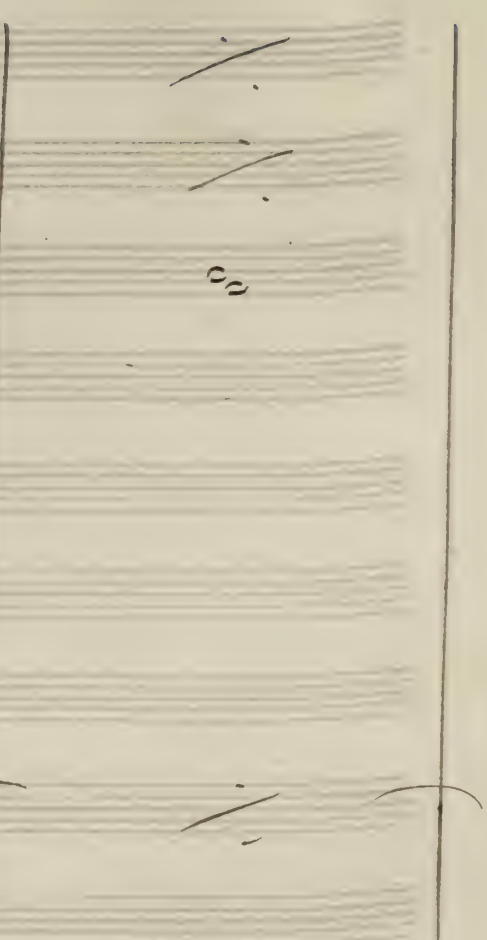
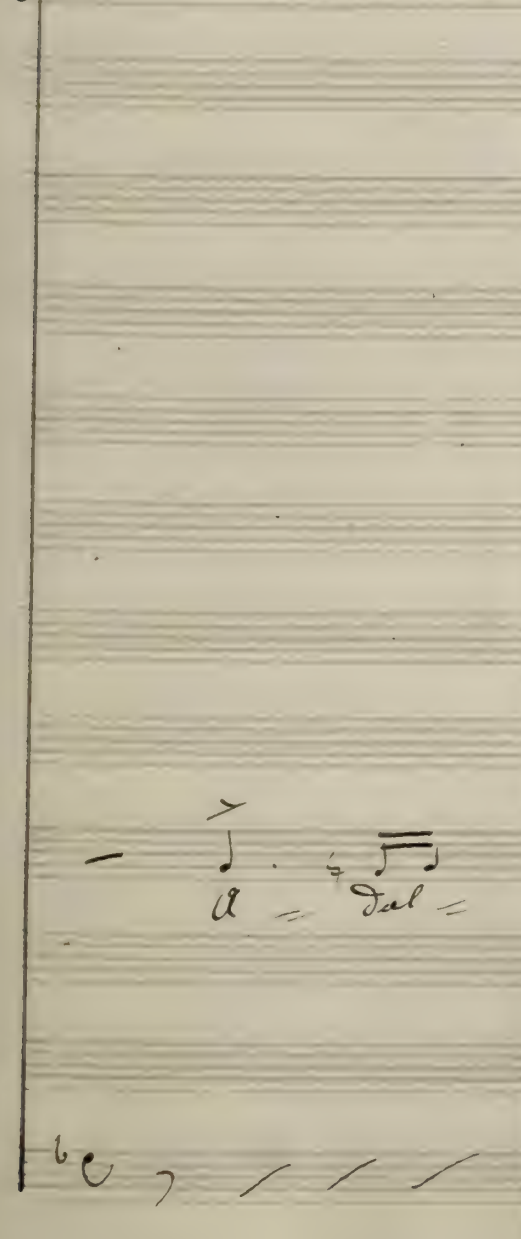
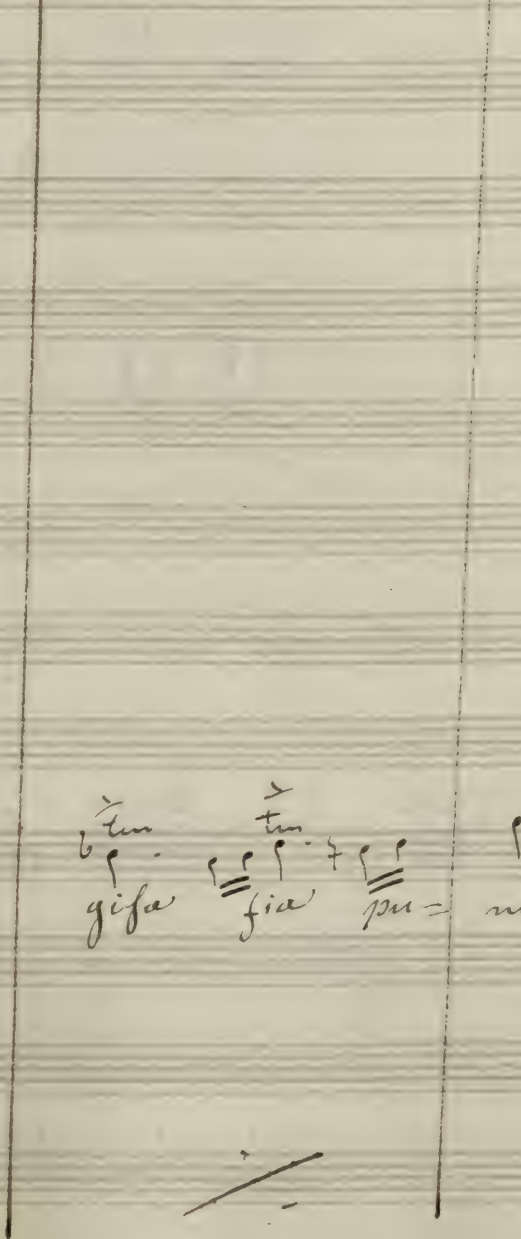
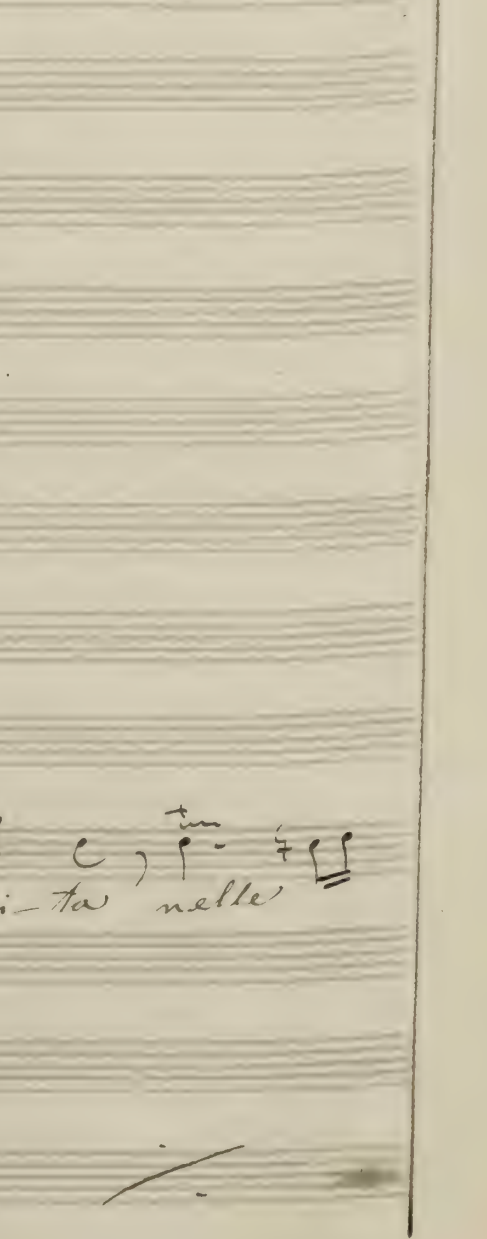
ppp

solo

tutto

spento che spento cada io

Solo

=mani acen-to a cen - to fiammi e tutti fian dif=

=trat= tò e Adal= gisa infe= dele ai suoi voti

Ahimè ebben cru=

A = dal = gisa fia pu = ni = ta nelle

fiamme per — ri — va' — — — si pe — ri =

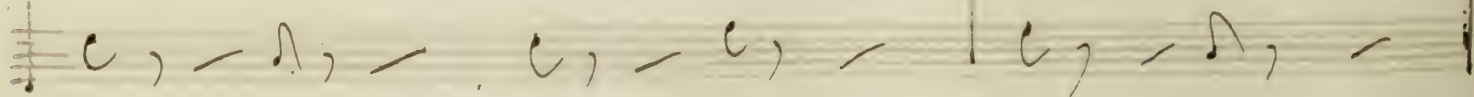
Unis°

pp

rà

ah! ti prendi la mia vita ma di

pizz°

lei di lei pie = tà ma di lei di lei pie =

colla parte

ppp

preghi al = fine in — degno è tardi nel suo

= tà

pp colla parte

ppp

In Tempo

cor ti vò fe = vire Si nel suo cor ti vò fe = vire già mi

C Il Tempo Animato

pizz°

pizz°

pizz°

assai Animato

passio ne tuoi | sguardi del tuo | duol del suo mo=

pizz°

arco

=vire possoal= fine io pos-so farti in= fe=

arco

arco

arco

= lice al par di

me posso far — ti al =

fin posso far — ti al =

Unis

fin in - - fe - li - ce al - par di

Colla parte quasi in Tempo

pp

pp

mè

a piacere

quasi in tempo

ah t'ap= =pagli il mio ter= rore al tuo piè son' io pian=

pizz.

Come dal 𝄋 al 𝄌

in Tempo

= gente al tuo piè son'io pian- gen- te in me sfoga il tuo fu-

= nore ma rif= parmia un'inno= cente basti basti a vendi=

Arco

arco

Norma

=carti ch'io mi svenò innanzi a -te bas̄ti ba- - - -sti basti bas- - -

3ª

loco

sti che io mi sve - - ni in - - nan - - zi a

a B a

3a

coi Vni

8va Oboe 2do

Unis: col 1o Oboe

il 1o Us: al 2do Oboe

il 2do 8va sotto al 1o ob.

ten

nel suo cor tiro fe- ri- re

fe ah! t'ap- paghi il mio fer—

B a

nò nel suo cor ti vò fe= vi- re

= ro- re no crudel In me

Solo

Solo

già mi

sfoga il tuo fu - - rore ma vif= parmio un inno—

fp

pizz.

pizz.

pizz.

Come dal al

pascio nei tuoi sguardi del tuo duol del suo mo—

=lente

pizz.

= vive posso al = fine io posso farti in - fe - lice al par di

Arco

Più Vivo a

me

posso farti al=

ah crude _ _ _ le!

fin posso

basti

Più Vivo

B.

8a

8a

3a

8a ai Fl.ti

8a ai Fl.ti

farti infe- li- - ce al par di

basti il mio do- lore ch'io mi sveni innanzi a

A.

B.

mē possо

far - ti infe=

li - - ce al

te basti

basti a vendi=

car-ti ch'io mi

par al
sveni innanzi a
par
te
di
a

mè al – par al – par al – par di

te in – nan – zi a te in – nan zi a

unis

8a

me

te

Recito

f

che osi? scosta- ti

Dammi quel ferro il ferro il

Recit°

ff

All.o

Mus

Gran Cassa

Olà mi= nistri Sacerdoti accor= re - - -

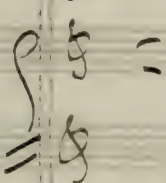
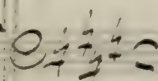
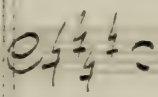
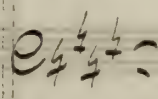
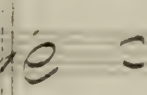
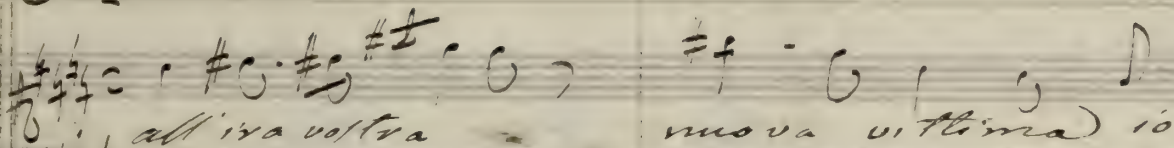
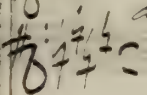
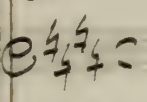
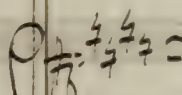
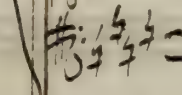
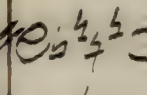
ferro

All.o

Strappate

Marcate assai

Tutti sortono in scena

Violini
Viole
Flauti
Oboe
Clarini in Do
Corni in Do
Trombe
Tromboni
Cimbasso
Fagotti
Timpani
G. Cassa
Norma
Pollione
Oroveso
Coro
Violoncelli

all'ira vostra — nuova vittima io

Solo

suolo

una spergiura Sacerdotessa ; i Sacri voti in-

Allo

franse tradì la patria e il Dio degli avi offese

ah de...

Allo

Oboe

in sol

in mi

in mi

la fa pa-lese

p

Si preparate il rog

oh ancor ti prego Norma pietà

lo svela

pp

udile

io

rea l'innocente accu

far del fallo mio

parla chi è

Son io —

ah non lo Dir

Bassi

io Stessa il voggo er—

lu

Norma

gelé

d'orror io gelo

mi manca il cor

tu de - lin -

non lacri- Dete

quente

Nor- ma non

mente

Oh mio ros-

Lente

for

Qual cor tradì Ahi qual cor per

Deh! quest'ora orrenda li mani fat - li da me fug

Risoluto

gire tentasti in vano crudel ro-ma-no tu sei con

nze un nume un fi lo Di te più for te ci valle o—

ni- ti in vi-ta e in mor-te Sul rogo Stesso che mi di—

vo ra sotterra an cora sarò con te

ah troppo—

arco

Corda

369

perd.

a voce soffocata

tar di tho cono - sciu - ta Sublime Donna io t'ho per -

qual cor qual cor tradito qual co-re qual

du-la col mio ri morso a amor ri-na to più dispe-

Fag

cor

qual cor

ra— to furente egli è moriamo in sie— me ah si mo

quest'ora arrendo

viamo l'estremo accento sarà di io fia- mo ma tu mo-

con passione

vendo non m'abbor ri-re via di morire perdona a —

8a Bas

io son la ve—

me

Coi 2di Tenori

oh in te ri— tor— na ai vassi cura canuto

oh in te ri— tor— na

qualcor perdeste

non mi abbor ri — ve

moriamo in —

padre te ne scongiu — ra Di che de li — ri Di che tu

ci — rassi —

cu — ra

canu — to

Clar

Quest ora or- renda tel Or-

sieme

ah si mo-

men ti che Molli ac- cen ti uscir Da-

pa- dre

te- ne

co —

ah per- dona

te il Dio se- ve- ro che qui l'in tende se stessi

giura se il Di—

Clar.

si e per—

sempre

io l'ho perduta

Subblime

mulo se il buon sospende indizio è questo indizio è

se— ve

ro

che tanto el—

Clar

quest' o—ra or— renda tel Del—

Dona per—Do—

Questo che tanto ec—cesso pu—nir non—

cas—to pu—nir non—

ce — crudel per sempre
na perdon io t'ho per - duta subblime
De ah no che il Dio punir non De ah no che il
De

Norma

387

che si cru-

donna che feci oh

Del

Ciel

Dio punir non

De

Allmo mod

in Mi♭

in Re

in D

f

Coi Bas

Norma

Deh Norma

Meno assai

Scolpiti

Voci

Norma
con grido fra se

Cielo ei miei

ne ascolti ap- pena

8a

figli

ahi miseri oh pena

Più mosso

8a basso

i- no stri figli

oh pena

Nor- ma sei

(s'incammina verso il Padre)

rea

parla

Più Moto

oltre ogni umana i-Dea

tu

empia

Più moto

m'odi Deh Deh m'odi

Scostati

Son

oh mia Do _ lor

madre a- quetati Clo- tilde ha i figli

madre

miei tu li ra- co gli era barbari l'in-

vola insiem con lei

no giam mai va

Colla parte

ah pa- dre ah padre un-

lasciami

a tempo

in Mi

pre — gò ancor

oh mio Do—

oh mio Do

ah quale or—

Più Mod

Solo a guisa di lamento

lor

lor

ror

Deh non voler li

ul-ti-ma del mio fatale er—rà e—

Deh non troncar sul fio —— re quell'innocente e

ab bi di lor pie ta — de ah padre abbi di

lor - di lor pie ta ah si di lor di lor pie —

Oboe

là abbi di lor di lor pie —

là

Commosso e

piange

8a

pa- dre tu piangi

gia f e gia

oppresso e st-

praga che mai spe- ra

2do

pian-ge e per-dona ah tu per

oh Ciel oh Ciel

core ha vinto a-mor oh Ciel

qui re- spinte la-pre-

incal

8a Fl

in Mi

Doni quel primo il dì a io son fe-

ah sì oh Ciel

ah sì ah duol

ghie-ra lo sì

8a Fla

Tromboni

Cimbas

Fag

Tim

Cor

ti-a ah più non

Chiedo ah più non

Ahi sì

oh Ciel

di duol

fi- glia

Spo- gli il

Crin Del

Vllo

Bas

8a Oboe

Vo Po

8a Vo Po

diedo ah no ah più non

diedo contenta il

ah più non

diedo con tento il

ah con fa

lar mio

fer to del

fer lo le gi

Fagotti

Bassi

B

8a Fla

ro-go io ascende-rò

ro-go io ascende-rò

mai ah non po-trò

co-pma di squa-lor

Dal A al B
Battute 13

più non chiedo o

pian- ge

pa- dre ah-

Ciel oh

che mai

padre ? tu nel pro—

Ciel sia

ah cessa in fe— lice

Spe— ra . qui ve—

Sempre ppp

metti

ver

io tel pro-

spin- te e

oh tu per

ali fi

metto ali fi

la pre—

27/2

incalz

Norma

413

Dona, qual pianto di—ce io son fe— li—ce assai più non

oh Ciel ah sì

oh Duol

ghie—ra la sì spogli il

Chiedo ah più non Chiedo ah no ah più non

ah più non

fi glia ah con-fo

Crin Del Ser to del

Chiedo con ten-ta ie — ro-go io ascen-de

con ten-to

lar mio — mai ah non po—

sento sia co— — per-to di squat

All.o Agitato

ro'

tro

lor vanne al ro-go

va in fe-

ed il tuo

8 Flauti

pa - dre ad - dio

lice

Scampio

purghi l'ara

il tuo rogo o Norma è il mio

e lavi il tempio

ma le

pa — dre ad

la più pure, la più santa inco—

ad

detta ma-le— det— — ta e—

8a

Viol

Ob

min- cia e- ter- no a- mor

Sgorgano

ta an cor

pianto fesi per mos so a un ge ni

ltin la an- cor es- tin - ta an

for

Fine dell'Opera

'Norma' tough? Not for Beverly Sills

By Ellen Pfeifer, Globe Staff 6/6/71

It was obviously not the ideal moment to interview Beverly Sills. It was 5 p.m.; she had just finished meeting with members of the New York chamber orchestra; she was preparing to leave for London the next day; her dressmaker was half an hour late for a fitting ("I'm having a fit is what I'm really having"); the kitchen of her Central Park West apartment was being remodeled; the front elevator didn't work, compelling visitors to enter through the back door; and her daughter Muffy had been complaining that a new pair of bell-bottoms was no longer neatly creased.

To make things worse, the opera super-star had really had no choice in the scheduling of the interview. She had been informed at 3 that "this Pfeifer woman was already on the plane."

Nevertheless, she was in remarkably good humor as we shook hands in the kitchen. She was wearing a simple maroon dress and the familiar Betty Boop curls. Taking in my rather untidy slacks (there hadn't been time to change), she resumed the conversation which my arrival had interrupted. "You see, Muffy," she said on the way into the living room. "Her bell bottoms don't have a crease either."

Motioning me to an enormous, down-stuffed (it seemed) couch and introducing me to husband Peter Greenough, her mother and daughter, she got down to business.

"What are we supposed to talk about?" With knees and chin in close proximity, I mentioned that the P.R. people had suggested "the horrors of the role of 'Norma' " which Miss Sills will sing for the first time Friday and Sunday with the Opera Company of Boston.

"Oh, there aren't any," she said, casually dismissing the accepted legend that the Druid priestess is one of the most challenging roles in the soprano repertory. "It's probably the longest role ever written, but vocally it's not difficult. It's ideally written for the voice and there are no pitfalls. The only problem is getting to the root of the drama.

"Norma has a great hold over the Druids. She could whip them into a frenzy. He 'Casta Diva' isn't just a prayer, but an incantation.

SILLS, Page A-27

Sills 'to try out' role of 'Norma'

★ SILLS Continued from Page A-25

"The Druids have a strong underground resistance movement—perhaps a whole arsenal of hidden weapons. And Norma has been consorting with the enemy, the chief of the Roman, legions, and even managed to have two children by him. I find her a little schizoid. In the first act, for instance, she tells Clothilde, her confidante, that she alternately loathes and loves her children. She must have been quite a handful as a wife."

About this point, the dressmaker arrived with a stunning tie-dyed concert gown that Miss Sills will wear in a summer concert, and it was held up for everyone's approval. The dress obviously reminded Muffy that she was not being included in the next day's trip to London and she was definitely not pleased. An argument began.

"You've come right in the middle of a family crisis," Miss Sills commented.

Leaving her husband to mollify Muffy, she returned to the subject of Norma. "You know, everytime I see pictures of singers as Norma, they are always posed with arms crossed and very haughty. I just can't figure that out. I don't ever expect to use that gesture.

"It's difficult to know how to play her. With Elizabeth (Queen Elizabeth I in Donizetti's "Roberto Devereux"), I could study facts about appearance and mannerisms. I read books about the queen and learned that she often paced with hands behind her back and that she rapped her fingers or a fan against the arm of a chair. I included all these in my repertory of possible gestures. With Norma, it's harder."

Besides her two Boston performances, Miss Sills will sing "Norma" in Connecticut, New Jersey, and at the Statsoper in Berlin. "But I have to try her out, see if I like her before I accept 20 engagements.

"I don't want the same thing to happen that happened with "Lucia" this year. I ended up singing 43 performances. That's really out of the question."

DRUID TEMPLE designed by Helen Pond and Herbert Senn serves as set for the Opera Company of Boston's production of "Norma" starring Beverly Sills.

Boston Opera performs Bellini work June 11, 13

Lyric 'Norma' rarely staged

By Michael Steinberg, Globe Staff

"Norma," which The Opera Company of Boston will give on June 11 and 13, is Bellini's most famous opera, but performances are rare. The Metropolitan has done it fewer than 50 times, once with a gap of 38 seasons, and with only seven Normas (Lilli, Lehmann, Ponselle, Cigna, Milanov, Callas, Sutherland). Boston got it first in 1854 at The Boston Theater on Washington Street, with Giulia Grisi, the Adalgisa of the 1831 Milan premiere, in the title role. Then there seems to be nothing until 1890, when the Damrosch Company gave it in German, and after that the record is about as spotty: a 1929 performance in Arlington by the Cosmopolitan Opera Company, one in 1944 by the Salmaggi Popular Price Grand Opera, and two from the visiting Met, with Milanov and Tourel in 1945, and last year with Sutherland and Horne.

It is an opera with a strong and simple story (see following synopsis). The priestess who breaks her ows is a stage figure full of pathos and one that fascinated early 19th century audiences: her most famous operatic incarnation before "Norma" is in Spontini's splendid "La Vestale" of 1807. In April 1831, just a month after the successful premiere of his "La Sonnambula," when Bellini was looking around for new material, there opened in Paris a new play called "Norma" by Alexandre Soumet. Soumet was a popular writer as well as a prolific one, and "Norma" was a hit. It attracted Bellini's attention, and he at once picked a cast of singers and commissioned a libretto from Felice Romani, the most famous and also the most elegant and sensitive librettist working in Italian at that time.

Bellini himself, from Catania in Sicily — but he was a blond, blue-eyed Sicilian — turned 30 while he was composing "Norma." He had composed seven operas, of which "Bianca a Gernando," I Capuletti ed i Montecchi" (after "Romeo and Juliet"), but particularly "Il Pirata" and "La Sonnambula" had huge success. He composed "Norma" in three months, but if that sounds fast, you might consider that Bellini composed ten operas during his short career of ten years (he died at 34), while Rossini's average output for a ten-year period was 18½ operas and Donizetti's 25.

"Norma" is one of those works that failed at first. "Fiasco, fiasco, solemn fiasco!" was Bellini's report to a friend: "I could no longer recognize these dear Milanese, who, with joy on their faces and exultation in their

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Bellini's lyricism, seriousness made his 'Norma' great

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hearts, had enthusiastically welcomed 'Il Pirata,' 'La Straniera,' and 'La Sonnambula;' yet I believe that in 'Norma' I presented them with a wrthy sister."

It seems to have been the performance. Giuditta Pasta, the Norma, an exciting actress, superb musician, but vocally reckless and technically insecure, had been scared throughout the month of rehearsals, and most of all by the Priestess's invocation to the moon, "Casta Diva." Bellini, who was completely devoted to this great though problematic artist — the leading role in the first "Sonnambula" had been hers — rewrote "Casta diva" eight times for her, and even then it took all his psychological skill to persuade her to sing it. But tired as she was, and frightened, she panicked and sang nearly a quarter-tone flat through the long opening recitative and the aria itself. The tenor was in poor voice, too, pushing, and singing flat. The performances soon got better, and as they did, "Norma" progressed from failure to acceptance to triumph.

"Norma" was a worthy sister, but also one different enough to have been a surprise to the Milanese audience. For that reason, too, it was a work that needed all the help it could get in performance. Bellini's special gift had been what the English critic, Geoffrey Toye, has called "lyricism in excelsis," and "La Sonnambula," "Norma's" immediate predecessor, particluarly embodies that quality with a touching simplicity and gentleness. Now, in "Norma," the subject itself, and no doubt o somce extent the awesome Spontini model and Bellini's own ambition to expand his expressive range, demanded something new.

The "lyricism in excelsis" is still there, in its simplest form in the second duet for Norma and Adalgisa, "Mira, o Norma," and, in a more highly decorated manner, in "Casta diva." It is no accident either that those two remain the most popular and certainly the most "excerptable" numbers in the opera. But for what was new in "Norma," and something that is enough to set "Norma" apart from everything else in that bel canto repertory that is now enjoying some revival in the theater, on records, and in concert, you want to hear what comes before "Casta diva" and "Mira, o Norma."

Before the aria, you have Norma's recitative (with choral punctuations), "Sediziose voci," in which she speaks against precipitate anti-Roman rebellion. It is not just a perfunctory recitative, designed to cover a lot of text quickly and to move the story forward with low-density music; rather, it is really composed (within the confines, to be sure, of Bellini's limited harmonic vocabulary). There is real appreciation of the dramatic possibilities of such a recitative, and in a way "Sediziose voci" reaches back to some of Mozart and to Gluck and Spontini, and then forward to the Berlioz of 'Les Troyens." Together, the fire and grandeur of the recitative and the rapt mysticism of the hymn that follows it, most marvellously put Norma on the stage for us.

But what precedes "Mira, o Norma" is much richer and perhaps excepting the miraculously sustained finale from the discovery of Pollione in the temple to the last curtain, it is the high point of Bellini's dramatic and musical fantasy in "Norma." It is the scene in which Norma tries to but cannot kill her children, her thought of suicide, and her asking Adalgisa to take the children and marry Pollione. The violin melody in the introduction (later Norma's "Teneri, teneri figli") is a supreme example of Bellinian lyricism, but one that tears at you like Violetta's "Amami, Alfredo" in "Traviata," though here, too, the marvel is in the power that casts the whole scene as one great arch.

Bellini's text declamation is vivid and full of character, and over and again throughout "Norma" he finds ways of combining his new, more acute feeling for words with his lyric invention so that he writes — in the scene where Adalgisa confesses her love to Norma, in the exchange that follows Pollione's entrance into that scene, in Norma's dialogue with Pollione ("In mia man, alfin tu sei"), in the ecstatic and agonized last pages — music in which a powerful and free articulation of words is set across a complete, self-sufficient lyric sequence.

Wagner said it well when he wrote: "People believe that I hate all the Italian school and especially Bellini. No, no, a thousand times no. Bellini is one of my predilections because his music is strongly felt and so intimately bound up with the words." Considering how uncomplicated the means (to put it mildly indeed), Bellini's orchestral-writing and harmony tell astoundingly. Though he has no metrical sophistication, his feeling for words, especially for Romani's fine verses in "Norma," gives him great rhythmic sense in a broader sense. The gift in excelsis of lyricism, his seriousness as an artist, his sensibility toward hisfemale characters — someone nicely made the distinction between Rossini, who made love, and Bellini, who loved — made "Norma" one of the great operas.